

# Advance of the Islamic State (ISIS) into the Heartland of Central Asia. “The US Plan is to Set Central Asia Ablaze in the Fire of Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism”

Foreign Policy Diary

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*Central Asia is a place of long-standing geopolitical confrontation. Now it turns into an active phase to destroy the peace in the region. The situation is worsening in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China.*

*In 2014 37 civilians were killed in bloody terror attack in Xinjiang, China. Earlier, Afghan Taliban has been fighting in order to capture checkpoints and ground at the Turkmenistan-Tajikistan border. Now, they have focused on the south-north direction: from Gerat to Kandagar. It's intended way of TAPI gas pipeline in Afghanistan and high road A1. Islamic State has risen its presense in the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan border. Turkmen border-guard has been taking high casualties and witnesses reporting mass beheadings there.*



The appearance of US-trained Tajikistan Colonel Gulmurod Khalimov in an Islamic State propaganda video on 27 May has sent a chill across Central Asia. The head of Tajikistan's Special Assignment Police Unit promised to wage a violent jihad. IS and other foreign fighters, probably the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, are operating effectively on Tajikistan's southern border. The problem territory named Gorno-Badakhshan has a long, open border with Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. The situation is also tense in Uzbekistan hit by a series of terror. Terrorist groups operating in the region are supplied mostly from Afghanistan.

The only power capable to maintain security and peace in the region is a Russian-lead SCTO military alliance, comprising Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Belarus with support of China and Iran. China and Russia are connected in The Shanghai Cooperation Organization combating against terrorism, separatism and extremism. The SCTO focused on providing security in the countries participants which face threat of security and stability. Islamic State is the biggest danger in the region. The SCTO proposed measures to ensure border security in member states in case of radical group advancement.

Currently, militants have been building up for an attack on Turkmenistan from two main directions: Murhaba and Amu-Darya. Advance from Murhaba direction threatens field Galkinish. Advance from Amu-Darya threatens the whole gas infrastructure of Turkmenistan supplying China, Bagtyryalyk field on the left bank of the Amu Darya and transitions across the river. Probably, Islamic State and Taliban don't plan full scale intervention because of complicated situation in their home front in Afghanistan. However, territory of Turkmenistan will be systematically hit by break-ins. These circumstances will probably stop developing of TAPI and TUKC gas projects.

Tajikistan is in risk too. The most possible actions of militants are taking of Badakhshan, attack on Horog, intervention into Hatlon region, taking of border settlements and raids on Kurgan-Tube. Also, there is capacity of movement into Kirghistan by Tahar-Tavildara-Garm direction. The one more opportunity for militants is to exercise mass disturbances and establish an independent Islamic State in Badakhshan. Or to start water blockade of Turkmenistan by attacking on Karakum channel.

It's clear that Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border will be the ground of a security and humanitarian crisis in the region. One of the main reasons of this is the presence of the US and NATO in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a result of Washington actions, these states have become bases for terrorists, often, armed by the US and trained by its military advisers. Meanwhile, the only success gained by the US-led anti-ISIS coalition is that Islamic State has gained more territories in Iraq and Syria.

Also the internal situation in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is dangerous because of low standards of living and education, distrust of the authorities. The US puppeteers have been taking advantage of these factors by pursuing its own goals through various non governmental organizations.

It is no secret that the US is committed to global domination. It uses all of the opportunities to kill two birds with one stone. Its two main geopolitical opponents are China and Russia. The plan of the US to set ablaze Central Asia in the fire of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

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